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Ethiopia: Pressures for political reform in Ethiopia are building as the government encounters continuing financial and student problems.

Asrate Kassa, an influential aristocrat and the able governor of Eritrea now in Addis Ababa, evidently intends to take the lead in urging Emperor Haile Selassie to initiate political reforms in order to restore confidence in the government. Asrate says he will propose to the Emperor that Crown Prince Asfa Wossen, who apparently is working with Asrate, should become regent with responsibility for domestic affairs, while the Emperor supervises international affairs. Asrate is also advocating that the prime minister and the cabinet become responsible to parliament.

Asrate intends to impress upon the Emperor the seriousness of discontent in Ethiopia by alleging--with some justification--that some military leaders are becoming more aware of their role as a prop of the regime and that they might move to seize power if the Emperor is unable to cope with a serious internal crisis.

Asrate's relations with Haile Selassie are good enough to enable him to argue his case, but it is unlikely that the Emperor will consent at this point to any move that undercuts his authority.

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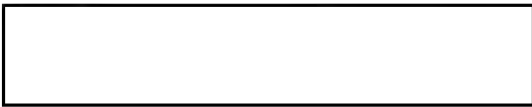
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